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Keywords

Wage Demands; Work Motivation; Older Worker; Self-Determination Theory; Expectancy-Value Theory

Abstract

The present study investigates the role of work motivation in explaining older workers wage demands. Relying on Expectancy-Value Theory and Self-Determination Theory we identify aspects of the *quantity* (the overall valence attached to working and expectations concerning the feasibility of working) and *quality* (the type of aspired work goals and reasons for engaging in work) of older workers' work motivation and empirically investigate relationships with their wage demands. Analyses on large sample of 1 782 workers aged 50 or more indicate that aspects describing the quantity or intensity of work motivation are differentially related to wage demands. Attaching high valence to work is negatively related to wage demands, whereas having strong expectations about being able to find another job is associated with higher wage demands. In addition, also the type of work goals one aspire matters: aspiring intrinsic work goals is associated with lower wage demands. Finally, we find interaction effects between both qualitative dimensions and between the value attached to working and engaging in work for autonomous reasons. These results show that differences in wage demands among older workers can be better understood by taking into account the quantity and quality of their work motivation.

Older workers' wage demands: relationships with the quantity and quality of work motivation

In many countries hiring and retention rates decline considerably after the age of 50 (OECD, 2006; Porcellato, Carmichael, Hulme, Ingham & Prashar, 2010). Therefore, enhancing the employment rate of people over 50 is a key challenge for many governments. One factor of importance is their relatively high labor cost (e.g. Simpson, Greller & Stroh, 2002). If the wages of older workers rise faster than their productivity, employers may be reluctant to hire and retain them (Skirbekk, 2008). Wage setting depends both on what employers want to offer and what employees are willing to work for. In this paper, we focus on the latter. Wage demands can be assessed by the wage that must be offered before an individual considers a job to be financially worthwhile (i.e. reservation wage). This wage can be less (i.e. willing to make a sacrifice), equal (i.e. pay inflexibility) or more (i.e. demand for a wage premium) than the last earned wage (Jones, 1989). Since productivity is believed to decline with age, the wedge between wage demands and what the market is willing to pay increases (Saint-Paul, 2009). In addition, institutional factors such as more generous unemployment arrangements, severance payments and tenure based wage may further bid up older workers' wage demands (Blanchard, 2004; Ichino, Schwerdt, Winter-Ebmer, 2006). Moreover, the enhanced salience of alternative paths (e.g. early retirement) (Bratberg, Holmas & Thøgersen, 2004) may revoke older workers from adjusting their wage demands. In addition to the role of institutional factors, it is important to extend insight in individual factors that may account for differences in wage demands among older workers sharing the same institutional context.

Although work motivation is considered of great importance in understanding older workers' attitudes and decisions concerning their labor market participation (Kooij, de Lange, Jansen & Dijkers, 2008; Schalk et al, 2010), no empirical studies have investigated how it relates to their wage demands. To date the issue of older workers' wage setting behavior has

mostly been approached from an economic angle. Studies focus mainly on the influence of financial arrangements such as prevailing benefit arrangements and early exit regulations (Haan & Steiner, 2006; Mitra, 2007)

In this paper, we explore how the *quantity* (or intensity) and *quality* (e.g. direction and initiation) of older workers' work motivation relate to their wage demands. Both dimensions align with insights from two complementary motivational theories: Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT) (Vroom, 1964) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985). EVT provides a framework for capturing the quantity of an individual's work motivation through the perceived attractiveness of working (i.e. value) and self-perceptions concerning the feasibility of finding a new job (i.e. expectation). EVT considers motivation as a unitary, quantitative construct and assumes that higher levels of motivation relate to more desirable outcomes (Vansteenkiste, Sierens, Soenens, Luckx & Lens, 2009). Irrespective of the quantity, individuals may however differ with respect to the quality of their work motivation (Meyer & Maltin, 2010). SDT distinguishes degrees of qualitative work motivation on the basis of the type of goals individuals strive for in their work (i.e. intrinsic vs. extrinsic) and the reasons that regulate (or initiate) their work engagement (i.e. autonomous vs. controlled). We investigate relationships between these aspects of work motivation and wage demands in a large sample of Belgian workers aged 50 or more. In Belgium older workers benefit from seniority based wages, enjoy legal employment protection and are highly aware of early retirement schemes (OECD, 2006), providing an interesting scene for investigating how differences in their work motivation may predict differences in their wage demands.

We first introduce the concept of wage demands. Next we describe the key concepts of EVT and SDT and relate them to older workers' wage demands. Next, we elaborate on the methodology, depict the results and discuss our findings.

Theory and hypotheses

Wage demands

Wage demands can be assessed by the reservation wage, which refers to the minimum wage that an individual is prepared to accept (McFadyen & Thomas, 1997). The reservation wage gives a precise indication of where one draws the line between financially acceptable versus unacceptable jobs. It can be understood as a pecuniary cut-off in an individual's range of potential job alternatives. The extent to which an individual's wage demands are 'high' can be assessed by scaling it to the last earned or current wage (i.e. reservation wage ratio, RWR) (Jones, 1989). Some workers are willing to sacrifice pay (i.e. RWR smaller than one), which relates to the notion of pay flexibility (Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, Lens & De Witte, 2010). Pay flexibility is defined as an individual's willingness to accept a job that pays less in comparison to a specific standard (e.g. one's current or previous earned wage). Others are not willing to make concessions (i.e. RWR equal to one) and some may even demand for a wage premium (i.e. RWR exceeding unity).

Overall, the literature suggests that, both for unemployed and employed individuals, having lower wage demands pays off. Individuals who display more pay flexibility extend their range of potential job alternatives (Kanfer, Wanberg & Kantrowitz, 2001), overall resulting in better (re)employment chances (Addison, Centeno & Portugal, 2001; Brown & Taylor, 2008). In addition, workers who are willing to accept wage cuts during recessions may be better able to safeguard their jobs (Dur & Glazer, 2008). In contrast, reemployment chances decrease when wage demands exceed one's previous earned wage (Feldstein & Potterba, 1982). This pay inflexibility may hinder an individual recognizing or exploring interesting career opportunities, especially among older individuals who have often accrued many economic 'side-bets' (Carson & Carson, 1997). Studies indicate that overall wage demands increase with age: higher reservation wages for older unemployed (Christensen,

2001; Eriksson & Lagerström, 2010) and workers (Hofler & Murphy, 1994), lower willingness to sacrifice pay (Alders, 1999) and relatively higher demanded wage premiums (Mitra, 2007). Therefore the issue of wage demands is of particular concern for the labor market participation of older workers.

Quantity of work motivation and wage demands

Although work motivation is considered an important factor in enhancing the future labor market participation of older individuals (Kooij et al., 2008; Schalk et al, 2010), with regard to wage demands it has only been touched upon implicitly. Motivation concerns more than the mere utility individuals derive from working versus non-working. It refers to what induces action in individuals and consists of many behavioral elements (e.g. initiation, direction, persistence, intensity) (Meyer, Becker & Vandenberghe, 2004). These aspects may explain differences in wage demands between older workers sharing an institutional context.

EVT quantifies an individual's motivation to strive for a particular goal by multiplying the extent to which successful goal attainment is expected and the valence attached to that goal (Vroom, 1964). The expectancy component can be defined as self perceptions concerning one's chances of finding another job or employment (Feather & O'Brien, 1987). This is similar to perceived employability, i.e. an individual worker's perception of his or her possibility to find a new job (Berntson, Sverke & Marklund, 2006). In line with earlier work on EVT we define the valence component as the perceived attractiveness of working (Feather & O'Brien, 1987; Feather, 1992). We use the labels of perceived feasibility and perceived desirability to refer to the expectancy and valence component respectively.

From an EVT point of view, perceived feasibility adds to the intensity of one's work motivation, triggering work-related attitudes and behaviors directed at finding employment (e.g. job search behaviors) (Šverko, Galić, Maslić Seršić & Galesic, 2008). However, the

relationship with wage demands may be less straightforward. Research among unemployed individuals finds that confident job searchers have a higher reservation wage compared to those who perceive fewer opportunities (Christensen, 2001; Pannenberg, 2007). When job searchers perceive multiple alternatives, they may become more selective. Higher selectivity is then expressed by higher wage demands (Babcock & Loewenstein, 1997). This may also apply to workers. High perceived feasibility to work indicates strong beliefs about one's value in the labor market. This may go hand in hand with higher perceived entitlements. Experimental research among students - assigned a role as worker - shows that perceived entitlements (made salient by for instance introducing minimum wages) affected wage demands upwards (Falk, Fehr & Zehnder, 2006).

H1a: Perceived feasibility is positively associated with wage demands

Concerning the valence component, Van den Broeck et al. (2010) found, in line with assumptions of EVT, that when unemployed individuals attach high valence to working they are more willing to sacrifice pay. If employment is highly valued, one's desires are most likely met by being highly pay flexible. In contrast, when individuals do not desire employment they may exert avoidance behaviors, for instance by signaling unrealistic wage demands (McLaughlin, 1991; OECD, 2010). Also in less extreme cases: if employment is relatively less attractive (e.g. in comparison to more leisure time), one might be tempted to make one's engagement conditional upon receiving wage premiums.

H1b: Perceived desirability is negatively associated with wage demands

In line with Expectancy-Value reasoning, it is expected that both components combine multiplicatively and generate effects beyond their individual impact (Feather, 1992; Vansteenkiste, Lens, De Witte & Feather, 2005). Given the expected opposite signs of both main effects, we hypothesize that the positive relationship between perceived feasibility and wage demands may be less outspoken when employment is highly desired.

H1c: Perceived desirability and feasibility interact such that the positive relationship between perceived feasibility and wage demands is weaker under the condition of high versus low perceived desirability.

Quality of work motivation and wage demands

An ‘expectancy-valence’ view is content free. Its focus lies neither on the contents of the goals nor on the forces that initiate an individual’s goal pursuits (Vansteenkiste, Ryan & Deci, 2008). In contrast, SDT focuses on the quality of motivation, taking into account the content of the goals that individuals strive for in their work as well as their reasons for engaging (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Motivation is considered of better quality when individuals are relatively stronger directed to intrinsic (vs. extrinsic) goals and are relatively stronger engaged for autonomous or self-endorsed (vs. controlled) reasons.

According to SDT, intrinsic goals (e.g. growth) are inherently satisfying, whereas extrinsic goals (e.g. power) can be considered as means to another end. Intrinsically oriented individuals aspire goals such as self-development, the establishment of meaningful personal relationships, etc. Their primary concern may therefore go to aspects of the job (e.g. opportunities for learning) that add to achieving these intrinsic goals. Conversely, extrinsically oriented individuals are directed to external incentives (e.g. praise, rewards) (Sheldon & Kasser, 1995). They have adopted a more *outward* orientation towards impressing others (Williams, Cox Hedberg & Deci, 2000) and are therefore more likely to set ego-involved demands and indulge in interpersonal comparisons (Sirgy, 1998). Therefore they may be more inclined to bid up their wage since this is directly related to status. Empirically, Van den Broeck et al. (2010) found that unemployed who aspired intrinsic work goals displayed more pay flexibility as opposed to those with extrinsic aspirations. Furthermore, Lievens, Serneels, Butera and Soucat (2010) found that nurse students attaching

more importance to intrinsic work goals such as “helping the poor” had lower wage demands for taking up a job as health care worker in Rwanda.

H2a: Intrinsic (vs. extrinsic) work goal orientation is negatively associated with wage demands

Besides the goals that describe *what* individuals aspire, reasons capture *why* one engages in work. Reasons can be situated on a continuum that expresses degrees of autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The most autonomous type of motivation is intrinsic motivation (e.g. engaging in work because working is pleasant), the least is external regulation (e.g. engaging in work to earn money or meet expectations of others). In-between lie two types of extrinsic motivation: introjected regulation and identified regulation. The former signifies engagement by complying with internally imposed pressures (e.g. feelings of shame). The latter refers to being driven by the personal meaningfulness or relevance of working. Latter types vary in the degree to which norms and standards have been internalized successfully, i.e. are part of the self. Intrinsic and identified motivation are considered to be types of autonomous motivation, involving experiences of volition and choice, whereas external and introjected motivation are regarded as types of controlled motivation involving experiences of being pressured.

We expect lower wage demands when older workers are engaged to working for autonomous (i.e. intrinsic or identified) reasons. Delfgouw and Dur (2007) assume that intrinsically regulated individuals may be willing to work for a lower wage because working is inherently satisfying to them. Lower wage demands may also apply for those who strongly identify with working. For instance, having a personal mission or vocation may explain why employees active in non-profit organizations are willing to work for relatively lower wages (Ben-Ner, Ren & Paulson, 2010). In contrast, when feelings of pressure dominate work engagement, individuals may be more inclined to demand a higher return. The theory of equalizing differences assumes that disamenities of a job are to a large extent reflected in its

wage (Rosen, 1986). Therefore, if people regard being employed as an obligation, they may want additional financial compensations.

H2b: Autonomous (vs. controlled) work regulation style is negatively associated with wage demands

Although both goals and reasons are regarded important in explaining the cognitive and affective correlates of motivational pursuits, further research is needed to explore their interplay (Sebire, Standage & Vansteenkiste, 2009). For instance, effects beyond their individual impact may be produced when they enhance each others salience. Vansteenkiste, Simons, Lens, Sheldon and Deci (2004) found that when contexts are in support of autonomous motivation the salience of intrinsic goals among its members increased. Since autonomous motivation fosters growth and development (Deci & Ryan, 2000) it may enhance the salience of intrinsic goals and thereby moderate the relationship between goal pursuits and wage demands.

H2c: Autonomous (vs. controlled) work regulation style and intrinsic (vs. extrinsic) work goal orientation interact such that the negative relationship between high intrinsic (vs. extrinsic) work goal orientation and wage demands is stronger under the condition of high versus low autonomous work regulation style.

Combining the quantity and quality of work motivation

According to an expectancy-valence view, what matters is having high expectancies concerning the feasibility of one's valued goals, regardless of their content. SDT however suggests that differences both in *which* goals are pursued and *why* individuals embrace them predict differences in motivational outcomes (Vansteenkiste, Lens & Deci, 2006). From an SDT perspective high levels of motivation are not necessarily more desirable if motivation is of a poor quality (Vansteenkiste et al., 2009). In addition, high-quality motivation may compensate for lower levels of motivation. Therefore, we have good reasons for testing how

the quality of work motivation interacts with the quantity of work motivation in shaping older workers' wage demands. We test two interactions in which the qualitative aspect may complement its quantitative counterpart.

First, perceived feasibility indicates *how high* individuals assess their chances or opportunities on the labor market, without considering *what* individuals want from their work (i.e. intrinsic or extrinsic goals). We hypothesize that the extent to which perceived feasibility relates to wage demands may depend on what individuals aspire. More specifically, although strong beliefs about one's value in the labor market may rightfully validate financial entitlements, intrinsically goal oriented individuals will be less tempted to bid up wage demands since they have stronger expectations concerning the job content compared to its financial conditions.

H3a: Intrinsic (vs. extrinsic) work goal orientation and perceived feasibility interact such that the positive relationship between perceived feasibility and wage demands is weaker under the condition of high intrinsic goal orientation.

Secondly, perceived desirability indicates *how attractive* working is, without considering *why* individuals are attracted to work (i.e. for autonomous or controlled reasons). We hypothesize that the extent to which valence relates to wage demands may depend on why individuals engage for working. More specifically, positive valence may relate more negatively to wage demands when valence and reasons are more concordant: i.e. when the attractiveness of work is supported by self-endorsed reasons for engaging

H3b: Autonomous (vs. controlled) regulation style and perceived desirability interact such that the negative relationship between perceived desirability and wage demands is stronger under the condition of high autonomous regulation style.

Method

Participants

We use data from an online wage survey enrolled in May 2008 among Flemish employees. A large-scaled media campaign (e.g. on national radio and newspapers) was set up to draw attention to the questionnaire (provided online). To enhance participation, we awarded a substantial cash prize (i.e. the equivalent of a monthly wage) to two randomly selected respondents. After deletion of incomplete records and further data cleaning, we compiled a database of 20 946 employees.

For this study, we selected all respondents aged 50 until 64 years ($n = 2\,270$). The average age is 54 years. About 70% of our sample is male. 43% has obtained a higher education degree, 34% has a secondary school degree and 23% has no secondary or higher education degree. These distributions differ somewhat from population level data from 2008 (Policy Research Centre Work and Social Economy, 2010): 60% of the active 50-64 years old workers is male ($\chi^2(1) = 88.03, p < .001$) and only 31% has obtained a degree of higher education ($\chi^2(2) = 168.42, p < .001$). Ninety four percent of our respondents has a permanent contract. The majority works full time (82%), as a blue-collar worker (16%), white collar worker (56%) or in governmental service (28%).

Measures

For measuring wage demands we rely, in line with Bloemen and Stancanelli (2001) and Haurin and Sridhar (2003), on self-reports. We asked the following question: ‘Suppose you would lose your job and you would receive an offer for another job, with equal working hours and the same benefits as your current job, how high should the net monthly wage (in Euros) *at least* be for you to accept this job offer?’ We computed the reservation wage ratio (RWR), which is the aspired wage divided by the current wage (Jones, 1989). Respondents were asked to fill in their current net monthly wage prior to the question concerning their

reservation wage. The RWR expresses how ‘high’ individuals’ demands are compared to their current situation: ranging from willing to make a sacrifice ($RWR < 1$) to demanding premiums ($RWR > 1$). On average the ratio equals 1.05 ($SD = .15$). Since this type of assessment uses an absolute measure for wage demands it differs from attitudinal Likert-scale measures used by others (Van den Broeck et al., 2010)

Perceived feasibility is measured by five items, an extended version of the measures of Berntson et al. (2006) and Wanberg, Zhu and Van Hooft (2010). Respondents were asked to rate their chances on finding a job (e.g. ‘A job that would match your skills, knowledge and expertise’, ‘A job at the same level as your current job’) if they would lose their current job on 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*Very Hard*) to 5 (*Very Easy*). Principal component analysis (PCA) revealed one factor with substantial loadings ($>.81$) for all items. The scale ($M = 2.69$; $SD = .89$) has good internal consistency ($\alpha = .90$).

To measure perceived desirability, we asked respondents to picture themselves in a situation job loss and to evaluate possible actions expressing a positive (‘I would immediately look for another job’) or negative valence to working (‘I would try to go on (early) retirement’ and ‘I would quit working’). All three items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*Entirely Disagree*) to 5 (*Entirely Agree*). PCA pointed out one factor with substantial loadings ($>.76$) for all items. The scale ($M = 3.96$; $SD = .99$) is reliable ($\alpha = .79$).

We used the scale by Van den Broeck et al. (2010) to measure the importance attached to intrinsic and extrinsic work goals. The intrinsic goals are self-development (e.g. ‘A job that offers opportunities for learning’), community contribution (e.g. ‘A job in which you can pass your knowledge over to others’) and affiliation (e.g. ‘A job in which colleagues care about you and render their support’). The extrinsic work goals are financial success (e.g. ‘A job that can make you rich’), social recognition (e.g. ‘A job that renders social status’) and power (e.g. ‘A job that allows you to exert control over others’). All goals were measured by

three items, rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Not Important at all*) to 7 (*Very Important*). Internal consistency of the subscales is sufficient: self-development: $\alpha = .73$, community contribution: $\alpha = .62$, affiliation: $\alpha = .62$, financial success: $\alpha = .65$, social recognition: $\alpha = .74$ and power: $\alpha = .86$. Since individuals generally tend to attach importance to most work goals (Vansteenkiste, Neyrinck, Niemic, Soenens, De Witte & Van den Broeck, 2007) we computed, in line with past research, a relative intrinsic work goal variable (Sebire et al., 2009). This variable is calculated by subtracting the mean of the extrinsic goal subscale ($\alpha = .86$) from the mean of the intrinsic goal subscale ($\alpha = .82$). This measure expresses an individual's level of relative intrinsic (vs. extrinsic) work goal orientation ($M = 1.45$; $SD = .99$).

In line with the Motivation at Work Scale (Gagné, Forest, Gilbert, Aubé, Morin & Malorni, 2010) we asked respondents why they made an effort in their current job and presented them a set of reasons capturing intrinsic (e.g. 'Because I enjoy working'), identified (e.g. 'Because my work is in accordance to my personal beliefs'), introjected (e.g. 'Because I want to prove to myself that I can handle my job') or external regulations (e.g. 'Because others would appreciate me more'). All reasons were rated on 7-point Likert scale from 1 (*Entirely Not Applicable*) to 7 (*Entirely applicable*). The subscales had good internal consistency ranging from $\alpha = .91$ (three items), $\alpha = .84$ (three items), $\alpha = .79$ (four items) and $\alpha = .82$ (eight items) respectively. Because regulation styles are theoretically interpreted as positions along a continuum, an individual's position can be expressed by the relative autonomy index (RAI) (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Consistent with past empirical work (Fernet, Guay & Senécal, 2004), this procedure implies summing and weighing the subscales according to the following formula: $(2 * \text{intrinsic motivation}) + (1 * \text{identified regulation}) + (-1 * \text{introjected regulation}) + (-2 * \text{external regulation})$. Before computing the RAI we confirmed the presence of a simplex pattern (i.e. more proximal regulations correlated

stronger than more distal regulations). Meeting this condition allows treating the regulation styles as positions on a continuum. An individual's level of relative autonomous (vs. controlled) work motivation is expressed by a score on a continuous variable ($M = 4.91$; $SD = 4.31$).

We controlled for characteristics of respondents' current and past career: organizational tenure, labor market tenure, functional level (Hofler & Murphy, 1994), changes of employer throughout the career, experiences of recent unemployment and current net wage (Haurin & Sridhar, 2003). In addition, we controlled for gender (Prasad, 2004), age, education (Eriksson & Lagerström, 2010), financial dependence of children (Bloemen & Stanca, 2001) and (working status) of the partner (Walker, 2003).

Five control variables were measured as continuous variables: years of organizational and labor market tenure, number of employer changes, months being unemployed since 2003, age and current net wage. We took the logarithm of the current net wage to accommodate for violations to the normal distribution. All other control variables are dummy variables: gender (reference category: male), and financial dependence of children (reference category: having financially independent children). The status of the partner is measured by four dummies: having no partner, having an employed partner, having an unemployed partner, and having a partner with another work status. Having a retired partner is set as reference category. Functional level comprises senior management, middle management, professional staff members (reference category), manual and operative workers and clerical workers. Concerning educational level dummies represent the specificity of the Belgian educational system. Having no degree of higher education was set as reference category. The three dummies are holding a professional bachelors' degree (granted by a higher education institution, but non-university level), holding an academic bachelors' or masters' degree

(non-university level) and holding an academic bachelors' or masters' degree granted by a university.

Results

Preliminary results

We present means, standard deviations, and correlations for the continuous variables in Table 1. The correlation matrix indicates that recent unemployment ($r = .06, p < .01$), labor market tenure ($r = .08, p < .01$) and age ($r = .05, p < .05$) are positively related to wage demands. Instead, organizational tenure ($r = -.07, p < .01$) and current net wage ($r = -.30, p < .01$) are negatively correlated with wage demands. Concerning the quantity of work motivation, we note that perceived feasibility is positively related to wage demands ($r = .09, p < .01$), whereas the relationship between perceived desirability and wage demands is negative ($r = -.04$) but non-significant. Perceived feasibility and desirability are positively correlated ($r = .14, p < .01$). With regard to the quality of work motivation, we find negative correlations between relative intrinsic work goal orientation and wage demands ($r = -.05, p < .05$) and between relative autonomous work regulation style and wage demands ($r = -.06, p < .01$). Both motivational aspects are correlated ($r = .33, p < .001$).

“(Table 1 about here)”

Hypothesis testing

We tested our hypotheses via a set of hierarchical regression analyses following Aiken and West (1991). In step 1 we entered the control variables. In step 2, we introduced all motivational aspects and in step 3 all interaction terms. All explanatory variables of interest have first been centered to their mean, before constructing interaction terms. Table 2 depicts the results.

“(Table 2 about here)”

The results from Step 2 confirm hypothesis 1a and 1b: perceived feasibility is associated with higher wage demands ($\beta = .11, p < .001$) and perceived desirability with lower wage demands ($\beta = -.06, p < .05$). With regard to the qualitative dimensions of work motivation, only hypothesis 2a can be confirmed. Older workers with a relatively stronger intrinsic work goal orientation are less financially demanding ($\beta = -.05, p < .05$). There is no significant relationship between autonomous regulation style and wage demands. The results from step 3 render no support for hypothesis 1c. The quantitative aspects of work motivation do not interact. However, the results support hypothesis 2c. We find a negative relationship between intrinsic work goal orientation and wage demands under the condition of high autonomous work regulation style ($\beta = -.05, p < .05$). Almost no relationship is noted within the condition of low autonomous work regulation style. The pattern of this interaction is depicted in figure 1 for low ($-1\ SD$) and high ($+1\ SD$) levels of the respective variables.

“(Figure 1 about here)”

No interaction effect is noted between perceived feasibility and intrinsic goal orientation but we do find one between perceived desirability and autonomous work motivation. The pattern of this interaction effect is depicted in figure 2 for low ($-1\ SD$) and high ($+1\ SD$) levels of the respective variables. However, it is not fully supportive for hypothesis 3b. The negative relationship between perceived desirability and wage demands is stronger when older workers are less engaging in work for autonomous reasons ($\beta = .05, p < .05$). Nevertheless, being more autonomously regulated is associated with lower wage demands when perceived desirability to work is low.

“(Figure 2 about here)”

Discussion

In line with our hypotheses, we found that both perceived feasibility and desirability relate to older workers' wage demands. More specifically, perceived feasibility is positively

while perceived desirability is negatively related with financial demands. These findings are in line with results from studies on reservation wages (Pannenberg, 2007) and pay flexibility (Van den Broeck et al., 2010) among unemployed individuals. In addition, although theoretically sound, we did not find an interaction between perceived feasibility and desirability. Lack of an interaction effect has also been noted in earlier research concerning for instance searching behavior as outcome (Vansteenkiste et al., 2005).

With regard to the qualitative indicators, we found that intrinsically oriented older workers are less financially demanding. High financial returns are probably not their main concern. This finding is in accordance with studies by Lievens et al. (2010) and Van den Broeck et al. (2010) on the wage demands of respectively students and unemployed individuals. Opposed to our expectations, we did not find any main effect of autonomous work motivation. However, we did find interaction effects between autonomous work regulation and both relative intrinsic work goal orientation and perceived desirability.

Autonomously regulated older workers have lower wage demands if they are also oriented at intrinsic goals. Consequently, high-quality motivation, as described by SDT, goes hand in hand with lower demands among older workers. In contrast, older workers who engage in work for less autonomous reasons do not so much take the content of their work goals into account in determining their wage demands. For them, desirability is of importance. If they attach more value to non-working over working, they set higher wage demands. If they attach more importance to working over non-working, they have lower wage demands. In both instances older workers may engage themselves in work for the same controlled reason (e.g. earn a living), but wage demands are higher if they value non-working over working. Those who value working over non-working may be compelled to do so because of their financial situation.

Although regulation style does not directly impact wage demands, our results suggest that it determines which factors shape wage demands. For instance, the value of working makes a difference for more controlled but not for more autonomously motivated workers. In addition, the goals one strives for are of importance for more autonomously motivated workers, but not for more controlled individuals. So it appears that in determining their wage demands, autonomously motivated individuals *follow* their dreams (i.e. goals), whereas individuals with a relatively more controlled regulation style *stick* to their reasons (i.e. some of them *need* to value work and therefore lower their wage demands whereas others *distance* themselves from work and bid up wage demands).

Theoretical implications

This study is the first to explicitly test how different aspects of work motivation shape older workers' wage demands. This is of importance since older workers' wage demands are considered to be crucial in extending their labor market participation (OECD, 2006). Wage rigidity may increase their risk for lay-off or early retirement. Moreover, it may also undermine their interest in exploring and making use of opportunities (e.g. changing from industry) at important career events (e.g. displacement) or phases (e.g. late career) (Clark, Ogawa & Matsukura, 2007). Using EVT en SDT frameworks we have brought the debate on older workers' wage demands, from a discussion about macro-level factors (e.g. seniority wages, unemployment benefits) closer to a micro-level understanding that attributes a central role to their work motivation. Their perceptions concerning the desirability and feasibility of working, the goals they strive for in their work and their reasons for engaging in work determine the choices they make.

Secondly, this study sheds some light on how the core elements of two different motivational theories relate to each other and jointly shape work related outcomes. Prior studies have already combined insights from EVT and SDT when explaining unemployed

individuals' willingness to sacrifice pay (Van den Broeck et al., 2010) or job search behavior (Vansteenkiste, Lens, Dewitte, De Witte & Deci, 2004; Vansteenkiste et al., 2005). But this study extends earlier efforts in two ways. Firstly, we have incorporated both aspects of EVT (i.e. valence and expectancy) and SDT (i.e. goals and reasons) simultaneously, whereas past research only covered these models partially. Secondly, we derived and tested theoretically driven interactions between dimensions of EVT and SDT. We are unaware of studies that tested interactions between quantitative and qualitative dimensions of work motivation.

Practical implications

In addition to previous research on the impact of financial factors, our study reveals that work motivation is of importance in explaining differences in wage demands among older workers. Results show that high wage demands among older workers are related to (1) high perceived feasibility, (2) autonomous motivation combined with relative extrinsic aspirations, and (3) controlled motivation combined with a low desirability. The policy debate on wage demands of older workers should not only reconsider financial entitlements such as seniority wages, unemployment and pension benefits, but also include aspects of work motivation in the discussion.

Concerning the first point, high wage demands related to high perceived feasibility do not need to be problematic. In that case, demands may reflect market value. Moreover, high perceived feasibility to find another job may prevent early retirement (Greller & Stroh, 2004). Of more importance is that older workers are able to make an accurate assessment of their labor market value. This issue could be addressed by actors that play a role in transitioning older workers between positions in the internal or external labor market.

Actors in the field are encouraged to stimulate high-quality work motivation during late career. This can be achieved through human resource (HR) practices (e.g. training, job rotation), more specific by enhancing the salience of intrinsic goals (e.g. self-development)

instead of extrinsic goals (e.g. financially rewarding). Moreover, practitioners may want to be cautious about how popular age conscious HR measures (e.g. reduction of working hours) are implemented. Autonomous work motivation is only fostered when managers provide their employees with a rationale, choice and opportunities for personal experimentation (Stone, Deci & Ryan, 2009). Finally, policy makers should be cautious about measures that financially reward late labor market exit (e.g. higher pension). Although such measures may enhance the attractiveness of working, they also enhance the salience of extrinsic work goals and undermine autonomous work motivation. As our study points out: low-quality work motivation may make older workers' participation more 'expensive'.

Limitations

Firstly, our sample was not entirely representative for the population of workers aged 50 or older, limiting the generalizability of our findings. The sample somewhat overrepresents higher educated male individuals. However, we believe this bias has not substantially affected our results. We found no relationship between gender and wage demands, and concerning education only one dummy (i.e. academic bachelor or master degree non-university) was significantly related to wage demands. Secondly, because of the cross-sectional nature of the design, we cannot draw strong conclusions regarding causality. Yet, our objective was to investigate differences in wage demands between individuals differing in levels or quality of work motivation. Finally, we rely on self-report measures. However, when focussing on the motivation of workers – their values, goals, reasons and expectations - self-reports can be highly appropriate (Van den Broeck et al., 2010). Although both work motivation and wage demands are self-reported, the latter differs substantially from the traditional Likert-wise rating and is moreover scaled to an additional standard (i.e. previous earned wage). Therefore we believe this type of assessment may be less prone to common method bias.

Future research

The framework we adopted proved to be insightful for explaining the wage demands of workers aged 50 or more. Future research may want to explore whether levels of work motivation and wage demands and the strength of their relationship varies across age groups. When individuals age their time horizon narrows, stimulating them to prioritize and to carefully allocate their time and resources (Carstensen, 2006). Therefore when older workers highly value work, they may be more willing to make more financial sacrifices than their younger co-workers. In addition, the motivational frameworks can also be adapted to predict the wage demands of non-employed individuals, such as students and unemployed on the verge of entering the labor market. A third avenue for research may encompass other relevant outcomes such as older workers' willingness to change employers or jobs (e.g. horizontal mobility). In addition to adjusting wage demands, mobility out of dead end jobs may contribute to older workers' participation on the long run (Feldman, 2008).

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Table 1 Means, standard deviations and correlations

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Changes of employer	3.16	3.07	—										
2. Recent unemployment	1.16	5.38	.25**	—									
3. Organizational tenure	19.49	12.76	-.56**	-.28**	—								
4. Labor market tenure	33.58	5.38	.08**	.03	.26**	—							
5. Last earned net wage (log)	7.64	.31	-.13**	-.10**	.18**	-.11**	—						
6. Age	54.29	3.43	-.04	.02	.24**	.58***	.12**	—					
7. Perceived feasibility	2.69	.89	.07**	-.09**	-.09**	-.05*	<.01	-.08**	—				
8. Perceived desirability	3.96	.99	.13**	.08**	-.28**	-.26**	-.05*	-.32**	.14**	—			
9. Relative intrinsic work goal orientation	1.45	.99	.01	.01	-.05*	-.08**	-.01	-.06**	-.03	.07**	—		
10. Relative autonomous work regulation style	4.91	4.31	-.06**	-.02	<-.01	-.06**	.14**	-.01	.14**	.10**	.33**	—	
11. Wage demands (RWR)	1.05	.15	.04	.06**	-.07**	.08**	-.30**	.05*	.09**	-.04	-.05*	-.06**	—

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$

Table 2 Hierarchical regression analyses predicting wage demands (RWR)

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
<i>Control variables</i>			
Changes of employer	-.03	-.03	-.03
Unemployment since 2005	<.01	.02	.02
Organizational tenure	-.04	-.04	-.04
Labor market tenure	.03	.03	.03
Senior management (<i>ref. professional staff member</i>)	-.01	-.01	-.01
Middle management	-.01	-.01	-.02
Manual and operative workers	.04	.03	.03
Clerical workers	.02	.01	.01
Last earned net wage (<i>log</i>)	-.30****	-.30***	-.31***
Professional bachelor degree (<i>ref. no higher education</i>)	.04	.04	.04
Academic bachelor or master degree non-university	.06*	.06*	.06*
Academic bachelor or master degree at university	.04	.04	.04
Female (<i>ref. male</i>)	.02	.03	.03
Age	.08**	.08*	.08*
No financially dependent children (<i>ref. having financially dependent children</i>)	-.03	-.03	-.04
No partner (<i>ref. partner retired</i>)	<-.01	.02	.02
Employed partner	-.06	-.05	-.04
Unemployed partner	-.06	-.04	-.04
Partner with other work status	-.02	-.01	-.01
<i>Main terms</i>			
Perceived feasibility	/	.11***	.11***
Perceived desirability	/	-.06*	-.06*
Relative intrinsic work goal orientation	/	-.05*	-.05*

Relative autonomous work regulation style	/	-.01	-.01
<i>Interaction terms</i>			
Perceived feasibility * Perceived desirability	/	/	<.01
Relative intrinsic work goal orientation * Relative autonomous work regulation style	/	/	-.05*
Perceived feasibility * Relative intrinsic work goal orientation	/	/	-.01
Perceived desirability * Relative autonomous work regulation style	/	/	.05*
<i>F</i>	11.19	10.86	9.60
<i>df</i>	19,1790	23,1786	27,1782
<i>R</i> ²	.106	.123	.127
ΔR^2	.106***	.017***	.004

Note: Standardized betas are depicted.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$

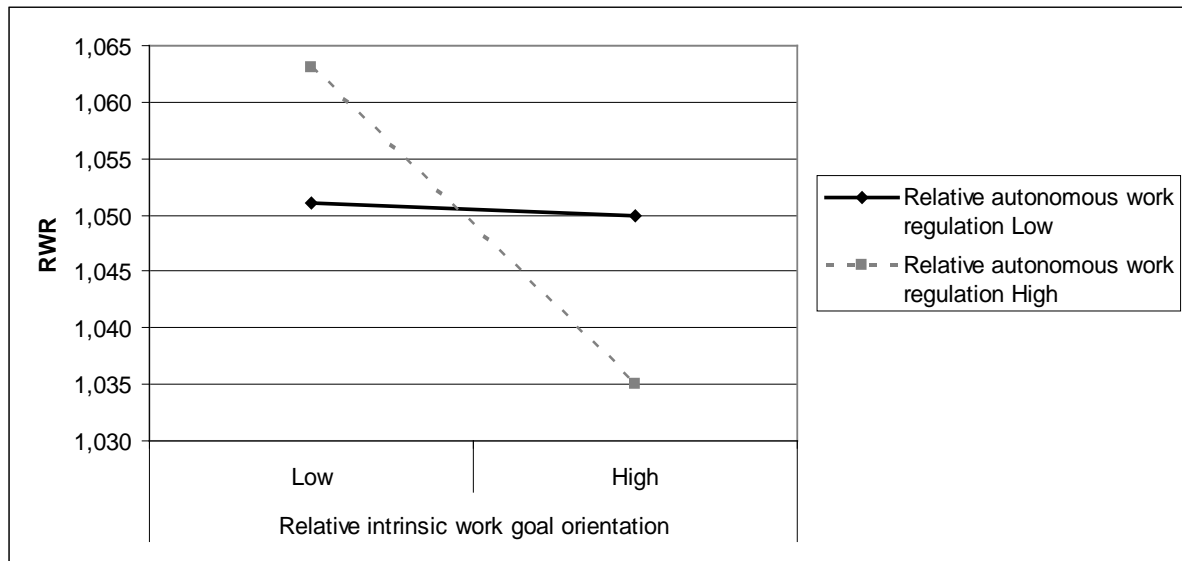


Figure 1. Interaction between relative intrinsic work goal orientation and relative autonomous work regulation style on RWR

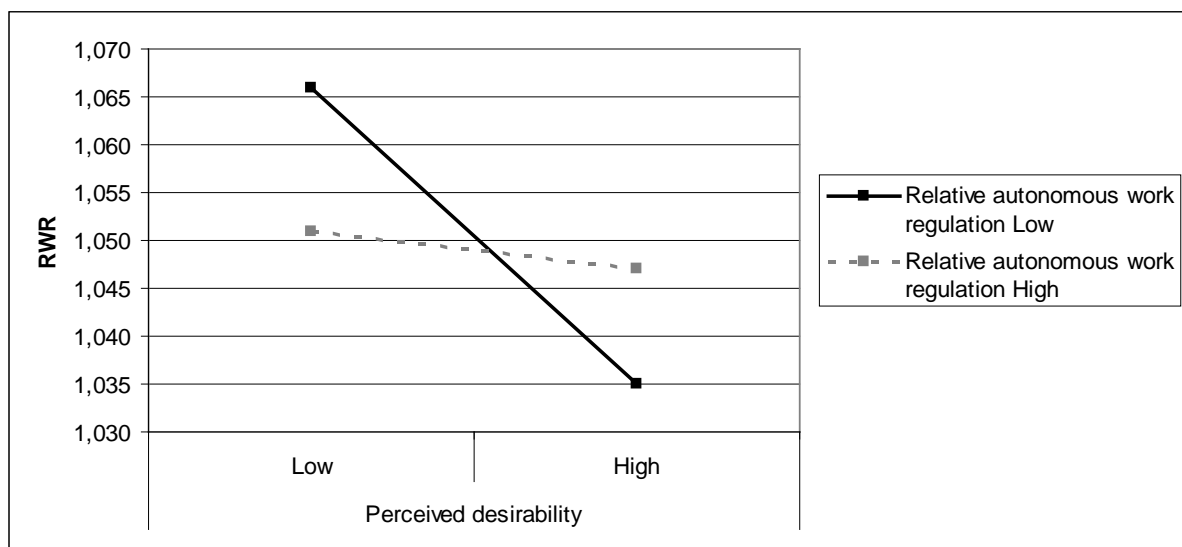


Figure 2. Interaction between perceived desirability and relative autonomous work regulation style on RWR